

c.c. reader

Save Stony Creek Valley

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As a trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

Section 27, Article I Pennsylvania Constitution

The people of Southeastern Pennsylvania are threatened with the destruction of their last unspoiled, natural area, known as Stony Creek Valley.

Stony Creek Valley is nestled between the Second Mountain and Stony and Sharp Mountains approximately 12 miles north of Harrisburg. The uninhabited, contiguous wilderness covers about 35,000 acres and is 18 miles long. A free flowing natural trout stream runs through the valley and empties into the Susquehanna River.

The Pennsylvania Power and Light Company and the Metropolitan Edison Company are proposing to flood nearly one-third of the valley floor and denude and excavate a large portion of Stony Mountain to construct a hydroelectric pumped storage plant. This area is surrounded by public hunting lands owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission who traded away the interior to the utility companies.

The Stony Creek Valley Coalition, Inc. was formed to preserve Stony Creek Valley as an unspoiled recreational and educational natural area. This coalition, consisting of 20 organizations as of June, 1974, opposes the construction of pumped storage or any other facility in Stony Creek Valley. The Coalition supports environmentally sound and efficient energy production and storage.

Natural Resource Destruction

The pumped storage facility would cast irreparable damage in the heart of one of Pennsylvania's two most important and highest quality wilderness areas. 1700 acres of interior natural area and 4½ miles of cold water fishery would be destroyed. Downstream and surrounding area would suffer damage during and after construction. When operational, about 58 percent of the lower reservoir and 69 percent of the upper reservoir would be exposed mud flats during weekly draw down periods. The utility companies have additional flooding rights of several miles that would extend the lower reservoir and mud flats into Lebanon County. The 54 and 100 foot weekly water level changes in the lower and upper reservoirs would create a turbulent

washing machine effect which would destroy the cold water fishery and aquatic life in the project area and downstream. New long transmission lines between the base power plants and the project would consume about 30 acres of land per mile of line. Existing recreational uses of hunting, hiking, fishing, biking, dog sledding, etc. in a natural area would be lost forever. The proposed project would be an ecological disaster in an area that is now magnificently governed by natural forces.

Wasteful Pumped Storage

Hydroelectric pumped storage is inefficient. It does not create electrical power. Instead, it uses a ratio of 3 kilowatt hours of base plant energy to pump water from a lower to a higher reservoir to get back 2 kilowatt hours of stored energy. Annually, the Stony Creek facility would use 4.5, return 3, and waste 1.5 billion kilowatt hours of electricity. In other terms, the efficiency of a nuclear power base plant is about 30 percent. Pumped storage operating at 67 percent efficiency, reduces the nuclear efficiency to 20 percent. 80 percent of the nuclear energy input is expelled into the atmosphere as waste heat. The efficiency is reduced beyond these figures because the upper impoundments usually leak.

What are the Alternatives?

When the project is completed in Stony Creek Valley in the mid-1980's, other ways of efficiently producing and storing energy will have made

hydroelectric pumped storage obsolete. Pratt Whitney, General Electric, Westinghouse, and others are developing fuel cells, combined cycle turbines, compressed air storage, etc. which will replace destructive and wasteful pumped storage. Conservation measures called for by energy experts and the Federal government could eliminate the need for pumped storage. Changes to existing rate structures could eliminate energy waste by the big industrial and commercial users. However, if PP&L and MetEd can prove that hydroelectric pumped storage will still be needed by 1985, they should plan to build the project in strip mined or quarry excavation land which is environmentally destroyed. The utility companies fail to realize that their decision, made in the 1960's, to build pumped storage in Stony Creek Valley is no longer valid nor socially acceptable.

What Can You Do?

Write to the Federal Power Commission, Washington, D.C.; the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Harrisburg, Pa.; your Federal and State legislators; and the newspapers protesting the destruction of Stony Creek Valley. Litigation costs in the state and Federal courts will be high.

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